

VZCZCXRO0466  
PP RUEHQU  
DE RUEHPU #0520/01 0921851  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 011851Z APR 08  
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7997  
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1854  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1657  
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC PRIORITY 1080  
RUMIAAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1472

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PORT AU PRINCE 000520

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/27/2018

TAGS: [HA](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: SENATOR BOULOS RETRACTS RESIGNATION; DUAL  
NATIONALITY ISSUE DIVIDES HAITI'S POLITICAL CLASS

REF: A. PORT AU PRINCE 447

[1](#)B. PORT AU PRINCE 320

PORT AU PR 00000520 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Ambassado Janet A. Sanderson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)  
)

Summary

-----

[1](#)1. (SBU) Senate Vice President Rudolph Boulos withdrew his resignation from the Senate in a March 19 letter to the President of that body, one day after he walked out of the Senate session that labeled him and another Senator a dual national and hence not a legal member of that body. Claiming to still be a Senator, Boulos demanded his reinstatement and promised to take the issue to court. He has since left the country saying he fears for his security. The Senate on March 26 elected a new Vice President. The Chamber of Deputies followed the example of the Senate and set up its own committee of inquiry on nationality the week of March 24. Prime Minister Alexis proposes establishing a joint Executive-Legislative branch commission to find a solution to the problem. Boulos' "Fusion" party believes the Senate's hunt for dual nationals is an attack on the political influence of the Boulos family. The issue of dual citizenship is at the very least a distraction from the pressing issues of organizing the Senate elections, passing an amended budget, and addressing economic growth. End summary.

Boulos Withdraws Resignation, Leaves the Country  
-----

[1](#)2. (SBU) Senator Rudolph Boulos (Fusion, Northeast) on March 19 sent a letter to Senate President Kely Bastien (Lespwa, North) retracting his oral resignation of the previous day. In the course of a March 18 Senate session that concluded that he and Senator Ultimo Compere held foreign passports in violation of the constitution's ban on dual nationality and hence did not hold the status of Senator (ref A), Boulos left the chamber and declared he was resigning. Boulos in his letter expressed his resolve to pursue all possible legal channels to defend his rights and those of his constituents to ensure his reinstatement. Boulos' letter said his resignation from the Senate would be a "betrayal" of his constituents. He termed the effort to expel him a "political lynching worthy of earlier dictatorial regimes." The letter said that only the judiciary had the power to decide his nationality. The Haitian press quoted subsequent Boulos statements to the press in the Dominican Republic claiming he plans to pursue the matter in the courts.

[1](#)3. (C) Reginald Boulos, brother of Rudolph and prominent member of the Port au Prince business community, confirmed to Poloff March 26 that his brother had left Haiti for the Dominican Republic, would soon travel to the U.S., and would not return to Haiti any time soon. They would take Boulos' right to remain in the Senate to the courts. If they lost their case in Haiti, they would take the case to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. If they lost the case there, Rudolph would run again for his same seat in the Northeast Department. While the issue was pending, Rudolph would not return to the Senate. Reginald claimed there was a warrant for the arrest of his brother and his brother feared for his safety.

[1](#)4. (SBU) On March 25, in a public radio address in the Dominican Republic, Boulos claimed that he had not resigned from the Senate on March 18, but had walked out of the Senate session to avoid his political lynching by Senators close to President Preval. He stated that he left for the Dominican Republic by road to avoid an assassination plot against him. Boulos additionally denounced President Preval, claiming the

President has always been after his family and that Preval is directing this crisis with the end-goal of dissolving Parliament.

#### Senate Opinions Divided

15. (SBU) The Senate on March 26 elected Senator Andrice Riche (OPL, Grand'Anse) as its new Vice President, by a 12-5 vote. Senators remain divided over the affair. Former Senate Vice President Edmonde Supplice Beauzile, from Boulos' Fusion party, expressed grave concern over the expulsion of her colleague. Senator Rudolphe Joazile (OPL, Northeast) on

PORT AU PR 00000520 002.2 OF 003

March 25 applauded Boulos' intention to return. He claimed that the Senate had never ruled on Boulos' verbal resignation and the investigation into Boulos' alleged dual citizenship should continue. (Note: Senator Joazile is a member of the Senate Commission on Dual Nationality and refused to sign the original report confirming Boulos' US citizenship. End note.) Senator Gabriel Fortune (Union, South) on March 26 stated that Boulos' return would facilitate the initiation of judicial proceedings against Boulos. He claimed Boulos was never a Senator, and called him a "usurper and an imposter."

16. (C) Senate President Kely Bastien told the Ambassador March 28 that he supported the Senate's enforcing the constitutional ban on dual citizenship within its ranks and said that Boulos is no longer a Senator as a result of his ineligibility. He stated that this in no way undermined the credibility of the Senate, nor was it a distraction from other business such as the electoral law, which a special bicameral commission of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies was considering. Without going into details, however, Bastien admitted that personal political interests also lay behind the initiative on dual nationality. The Senate President expressed exasperation with (former) Senator Boulos' actions following the March 18 Senate session, particularly his flight to the Dominican Republic and his allegations that Preval was plotting against Boulos. He predicted this would complicate future Haitian-Dominican parliamentary exchanges. Bastien termed Boulos' behavior "un-Haitian." However, Bastien said the matter of dual nationality was now "closed," at least as far as the Senate was concerned.

#### Chamber of Deputies Hops on Bandwagon

17. (SBU) The Chamber of Deputies set up its own committee of inquiry on nationality the week of March 24 aimed at uncovering dual national deputies. Deputy Arcene Dieujuste (MOCHRENAH, Artibonite) was elected president of the Commission, Jonas Coffy (Fanmi Lavalas, West) Vice president and Deputy Ronald Lareche (Fusion, Northeast) Secretary. Chamber of Deputies President Eric Jean Jacques submitted nationality documents of members of the Commission to the GoH Ministry of the Interior to ensure that none of the Commission members are dual nationals. The Commission is tasked with providing a report no later than thirty days from March 28 on their findings. Press reports say 10-20 deputies are suspected of being dual nationals.

18. (C) Some deputies share Boulos' belief in a Preval conspiracy. Deputy Sorel Francois (Fanmi Lavalas, West) informed Poloff March 27 that he and the other Deputies responsible for Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis' interpellation (ref B) believe President Preval initiated this crisis in order to oust Boulos. Francois claimed that the chairman of the Senate's Commission of Inquiry on Nationality, Youri Latortue (LAAA, Artibonite), told him before the Boulos resignation that the Commission had not taken the investigation seriously until pressed to do so by President Preval. Preval allegedly needed the crisis to exert more control over the Senate. Francois claimed that Preval still blamed Boulos for the murder of journalist Jean Leopold Dominique. Whatever these accusations, the press reported March 31 that Senator Boulos had replied in writing to a questionnaire from an investigating magistrate about his involvement in the 2000 murder of journalist Jean Leopold Dominique. (Note: Dominique, who was murdered on April 3, 2000, was active in the fight to get compensation for the families of children who died after taking medicines contaminated with glycol-di-ethylen, allegedly manufactured by Pharval Laboratories, of which Rudolph Boulos was CEO. End note.)

#### Comment

19. (SBU) Accusations that President Preval stoked the dual nationality issue as a way to destroy the Boulos family politically and weaken the legislature are a natural product of Haiti's divisive political culture. They are next to impossible to substantiate or disprove. Senator Youri Latortue -- who heads the commission that uncovered Boulos' alleged dual nationality, considers himself a leading Senator, and has presidential ambitions -- might naturally

want to eliminate Boulos as a competitor. Boulos' flight from Haiti and histrionic press statements have discredited

PORT AU PR 00000520 003.2 OF 003

him to a degree on his home turf, including within his own political party, and will make his legal struggle to recover his seat more difficult. What is certain is that the legislature's efforts to purge itself of dual nationals is distracting attention from the electoral law and other pressing issues, as well as diminishing the stature of the legislative branch as a whole. Once the electoral law is eventually passed, the Senate's functionality will be vulnerable, since it will be left with only 18 Senators in a body with a quorum defined as 16. The Senate or Chamber of Deputies may further pursue the issue with Cabinet ministers and other high-level government officials, which could destabilize the executive branch as well. One can only hope that the Prime Minister's proposal of a joint Executive-Legislative commission takes shape and defuses the issue.

SANDERSON